

HOUSE BILL No. 1484

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED BILL

Citations Affected: IC 10-17-1.1.

Synopsis: Veterans' affairs ombudsperson. Establishes the department of veterans' affairs ombudsperson. Provides that the ombudsperson shall operate as a separate office within the department of veterans' affairs. Provides that the duties of the ombudsperson include: (1) providing education to veterans regarding resources available; (2) acting as an advocate of a veteran who is in need of assistance offered by the department; (3) making recommendations to the general assembly that address the demonstrated needs of Indiana veterans; (4) facilitating the resolution of complaints and problems with the department; and (5) making recommendations to the director of the department to improve assistance to Indiana veterans. Provides that the ombudsperson must annually submit a report to the governor and the legislative council.

Effective: July 1, 2009.

Soliday

January 14, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on Veterans Affairs and Public Safety.

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First Regular Session 116th General Assembly (2009)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2008 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

HOUSE BILL No. 1484

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning public safety.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

- 1 SECTION 1. IC 10-17-1.1 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE
2 AS A **NEW** CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
3 JULY 1, 2009]:
4 **Chapter 1.1. Department of Veterans' Affairs Ombudsperson**
5 **Sec. 1. The department of veterans' affairs ombudsperson is**
6 **established as a separate office within the department of veterans'**
7 **affairs established by IC 10-17-1-2. An ombudsperson is not**
8 **required to report to the director of the department of veterans'**
9 **affairs or the military affairs commission.**
10 **Sec. 2. (a) The governor shall appoint an ombudsperson. The**
11 **governor shall appoint a successor ombudsperson within thirty**
12 **(30) days after a vacancy occurs in the position of the**
13 **ombudsperson. The ombudsperson shall receive a salary fixed by**
14 **the governor.**
15 **(b) The ombudsperson must be:**
16 **(1) an honorably discharged veteran who has at least six (6)**
17 **months service in the armed forces of the United States; and**



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(2) a citizen of Indiana and a resident of Indiana for at least five (5) years immediately preceding the ombudsperson's appointment.

Sec. 3. The duties of the ombudsperson include the following:

(1) Educating veterans about federal and state resources available to them.

(2) Acting as an advocate for a veteran who is in need of assistance offered by the department of veterans' affairs.

(3) Making recommendations to the general assembly that address the demonstrated needs of Indiana veterans.

(4) Facilitating with the department of veterans' affairs the resolution of complaints and problems.

(5) Providing recommendations to the director of the department of veterans' affairs to improve the ability of the department of veterans' affairs to provide assistance to Indiana veterans.

Sec. 4. (a) An ombudsperson shall be given access to all the records of the department of veterans' affairs and the veterans' affairs commission established by IC 10-17-1-3.

(b) An ombudsperson who receives confidential information from the department of veterans' affairs or the veterans' affairs commission shall maintain the confidentiality of the information.

Sec. 5. (a) Each year, on or before October 1, the ombudsperson shall prepare a report on the operations of the department of veterans' affairs ombudsperson.

(b) A copy of the report shall be provided to the following:

(1) The governor.

(2) The legislative council.

(3) The department of veterans' affairs.

(4) The veterans' affairs commission.

(c) The report shall include the following:

(1) Any recommendations to the general assembly that address the demonstrated needs of Indiana veterans.

(2) A summary of complaints investigated by the ombudsperson.

(3) A summary of recommendations made to the director of the department veterans' affairs to improve the ability of the department of veterans' affairs to provide assistance to Indiana veterans.

(d) A report provided under this section to the legislative council must be in an electronic format under IC 5-14-6.

Sec. 6. The department of veterans' affairs shall provide and

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- 1 **maintain office space for the ombudsperson.**

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